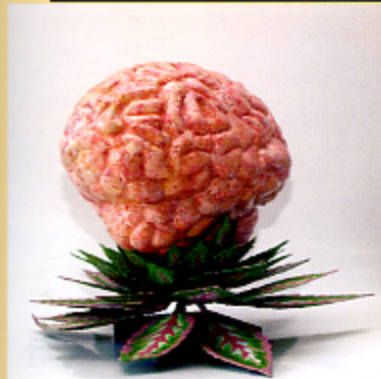


# ART *India*

PINK AND PERFECT



**Suhasini Kejriwal.** *Untitled.* Fibreglass, metal, wood and acrylic. 2008.

NO ONE COULD COMPLAIN THAT SUHASINI KEJRIWAL'S SOLO SHOW OF CANVASES AND SCULPTURES, *An Advertisement for Heaven or Hell*, at Chemould Prescott Road, Mumbai, from 19th February to 14th March didn't present pretty pink things - each one laced with just enough of the sinister to keep us entertained.

On view were large mixed media canvases, where curling green fronds, pink flowers and fuchsia-hued fruit were rife with creepy-crawlies like cockroaches, furry-legged black spiders and tiny (oh-so-cute) mice. The paintings hung in a happy limbo between 19th century illustrations of flora and fauna, French 'Primitive' artist Henri Rousseau's flat, dense paintings of exotic jungles and illustrations such as Quentin Blake's accompaniments to Roald Dahl's dark and delicious tales for children.

Plant and animal life got tangled up with human body parts in both paintings and sculptures. In one *Untitled* canvas, miniature crimson kidneys dangled like cherries in the midst of tropical fruit. A fibreglass construction showed a giant pink brain emerging from a bed of spiky green leaves, like an icky fruit. Another sculpture consisted of a wig of black hair; its corkscrew curls reminiscent of tangled weeds.

Calcutta-based Kejriwal was educated at the Parsons School of Design, New York, and her background in design was evident here. Apparently a result of Kejriwal's nostalgia for Calcutta's craft tradition when she was away from home, the over-crowded imagery of the paintings was inspired by the detailing found in embroidery or Mehendi drawings. Yet, if her 'surreal things' were meant to investigate the relationship between art and craft or explore the exoticisation of the body in contemporary society, they didn't. Nor were they original - doesn't Mithu Sen do a better job of bedecking velvet models of human organs with sequins in her sculptures?

But who expects art to plumb the contradictory depths of human nature anyway? At a point where Tokyo-based Takashi Murakami's Kawaii figurines and N.S. Harsha's designer ties for Hermes are being applauded, it sounds old maid-ish to bemoan *An Advertisement's* superficiality. **ZEHRA JUMABHOY**